

## PARK OFFICIALS PROFILE



You are the town's park officials, entrusted with the long-term welfare of the park environment, its recreational uses and the safety of its users. The wooded sections of the park and the nearby neighborhoods have become the core of the deer population expansion affecting the park, deer and townspeople.

- The park now has a visible browse line due to deer overbrowsing. This compromises the park's natural beauty and reduces habitat and food for other animals.
- During the past several years you have observed a dramatic increase in deer-vehicle accidents in and around the park.
- Ecological studies show deer numbers have increased and plant biodiversity has decreased. In fact, 10 wildflower species have been eliminated locally. Wildlife biologists have determined the balance of the ecosystem in your park is in jeopardy due to overpopulated deer.
- Plans for deer population management *must* address public safety concerns. The park currently prohibits general hunting due to the proximity of residential areas to the park, but may consider a highly regulated hunt or sharpshooting program if proper safeguards are addressed.
- Deer offer a significant visual attraction at the town park in addition to the nature center, picnic areas, jogging trails, bike tracks, ponds, wildflowers and other wildlife such as swans, geese, squirrels and songbirds.
- Park attendance and revenue are down because of the increased threat of Lyme disease.

### **Consider these questions as you debate the deer proposals during your town meeting:**

- How will each proposed management option affect the long-term ecological health and use of the park?
- Would different interest groups be willing to help park officials implement their solutions?
- Do the proposed management plans ensure reasonable public safety while keeping the park open for public use?
- Do the proposed management plans help protect park users from the threat of Lyme disease?

### **WEB RESEARCH SITES**

- Lyme disease and deer ticks—See the publication titled “Lyme Disease: Clinical Update for Physicians,” Pages 1 & 2 ([www.lyme.org](http://www.lyme.org) and [www.aldf.com](http://www.aldf.com))
- Quality Deer Management Association ([www.QDMA.com](http://www.QDMA.com))
- International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies—Read the report titled “Bears in the Backyard, Deer in the Driveway” ([www.iafwa.org/bearsbackyardfacts.html](http://www.iafwa.org/bearsbackyardfacts.html))
- Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry ([www.fhfh.org](http://www.fhfh.org))